

Some restrictions observed at child-birth by the
Land-Dyaks of Quop.

For some six months prior to the birth of a child the wife has to regulate her daily life on different lines, and the following are some of the restrictions she has to observe.

- 1.—She is not allowed to carry stone, for fear that the child may die or be unable to walk—(*Midap batuh*).
- 2.—She may not eat an egg, lest the birth should be difficult and harm befall the mother—(*Midap turoh*).
- 3.—She may not drink well-water for the same reason—(*Midap piin*).
- 4.—She is not allowed to fasten the lid of a jar, lest it would cause death to mother and child at birth.
- 5.—She must always go out of a room or house by the same door by which she entered, lest the birth should be difficult.
- 6.—She must not break the legs of a frog, for fear that the legs and arms of the child be like the broken legs of a frog—(*Midap tegarag*).
- 7.—She must be careful not to throw stones or anything into the water, because they sink and are never found again, so will it be with the child, for it will be born without life.
- 8.—She must not strike any snake, lest the child be weak.
- 9.—She may not plant bananas, for fear that the child may have a boil—(*Midap barak*).
- 10.—She may not cut a root that hangs down into the water, lest she herself may not survive the birth.
- 11.—She is forbidden to eat any kind of tortoise, for fear that the birth be difficult.
- 12.—She may not drive a nail or bore a hole, lest the birth should be difficult.
- 13.—She may not be out late at night, or shed the blood of any animal, for fear of complications at birth—(*Singang buran*).

The husband during this period must be careful in

his daily life and he must observe many of the above restrictions (*viz.* Nos. 1, 4, 6--10, 12, and 13).

1.—No yam may be brought into the house, lest the child may get a cough—(*Midap kuduk*).

2.—No tuba or shoot of a bamboo may be brought into the house, lest it cause sickness of any sort to the child.

3.—No stranger would be allowed into the room where the mother and child lay for fear of sudden shock to either. After the lapse of sixteen days, a feast is held, to which the mid-wife (*penading*), relations and friends are invited.

The *penading* alone may hand food to the child and its parents.

[*From notes communicated by Simigaat, a Land-Dayak of Quop.*] ED.

Tau Tepang.

This is a curious superstitious belief prevalent among all the tribes of the Sea-Dayaks, and particularly so with those tribes who live far in the interior, away from all civilisation.

Tau Tepang people are supposed to have the power of inflicting all sorts of disasters on villages, people, crops, etc., and the manner of this is distinctly startling; for it is only *the head* of a *Tau Tepang* person that can do the harm and the belief is, that during the night the head leaves the *Tau Tepang* person's body, returning in the early morning after having accomplished its work of evil.

This power can only be inherited, and of course there are several stories to account for its origin, no two tribes believing in the same version. The following was told to me by Majeng, the Government chief in the Undup :—

Once upon a time an enormous snake called *Nabau** fell down from the heavens, doing incalculable harm

* [Some Saribas Dayaks say that *Nabau* was so enormous that he merely reached down from the skies to eat up the paddy; and it was not until the people had blown several poisoned darts into his body that he fell down to earth altogether]. ED.